The College Search: Finding The Right Fit

College & Career Pathways 2019

Types of postsecondary education

- Length — certificate, 2-year, or 4-year?
- University?
- Specialized or general?
- Online or physical location?
Majors/academic programs

- What do I want to learn?
- What subjects interest me?
- What do I hope to do?
- What if I have no idea?

Types of postsecondary education

- What size student body, campus, and classes are right for me?
- Do I want to stay close to home or go farther away?
- City, rural, or suburban?

Academic selectivity

- What chance do I have of getting in? Are there special program requirements?
- What range of selectivity should I consider, especially for an academic scholarship or merit aid?
Campus atmosphere

- What type of “personality” does the campus have?
- How many students live on campus?
- What are the academic expectations?
- Coed, single gender? Religious? Military?
- What sorts of supports are available to students?

Student life & diversity

- What housing and meal options are available?
- How diverse is the student body?
- What opportunities and activities are available?
- How do students spend their time?

Outcomes information

- How many first-year students return for their sophomore year?
- How many students graduate within 4 or 5 years?
- What are graduate school admission & job placement rates?
**Cost & affordability**

- What is the sticker price vs. actual cost?
- What are average debt and repayment rates?
- Know your starting point: EFC Calculator [www.vsac.org/resources/efc-calculator](http://www.vsac.org/resources/efc-calculator)
- Know the college's starting point: Net Price Calculator [www.nces.ed.gov/collegenavigator/](http://www.nces.ed.gov/collegenavigator/)
- As with selectivity, consider applying to financial safety, match, and reach schools.

**College Hunch**

A mobile app that lets you compare colleges' key stats, including net price.

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**Wisdom to take with you**

- Be open to all kinds of options.
- Your goals and preferences may change.
- Know your strengths and weaknesses.
- Do not take admission decisions personally!
- Be organized and follow through.

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